

## SEA TURTLE SAMPLING PROTOCOLS

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### SAMPLING REQUIREMENTS (all turtles)

- 1 Identify, noting immediate observable characteristics
- 2 Photograph
- 3 Describe any new and/or healed wounds
- 4 Body Measurements (3, curvilinear)
- 5 Identification Criteria (6)
- 6 Biopsy/tissue (genetic) sample
  - Live Animals: Turtle must be > 25 cm notch to tip carapace length
  - Dead Animals: Retain animals whole. If not possible then obtain biopsy/tissue sample
- 7 Tag with inconel tag(s) on rear flipper(s): 1 for dead sea turtles, 2 for live sea turtles > 26 cm notch to tip carapace length
- 8 Scan for PIT tags on flippers and all soft tissues

Inconel Tag Location: Proximal to the first scale (closest to the body) on the trailing edge of each rear flipper for all turtles except Leatherback. For Leatherback turtles, tag along the trailing edge of the rear flipper approximately 5 cm (~2 inches) out from the base of the tail (they do not have flipper scales). Position the tag so there will be adequate overhang (approx. 1/3 length of tag) after it is attached. See Figures 39 and 40.

Biopsy Location: Posterior trailing edge of the rear flipper and out (away from the body) from the Inconel tag location. **One crescent shape biopsy per rear flipper.** See Figure 40.

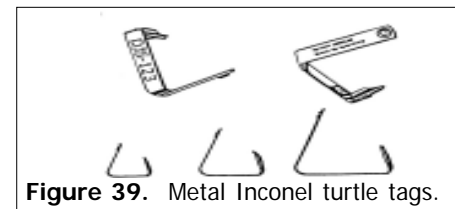


Figure 39. Metal Inconel turtle tags.

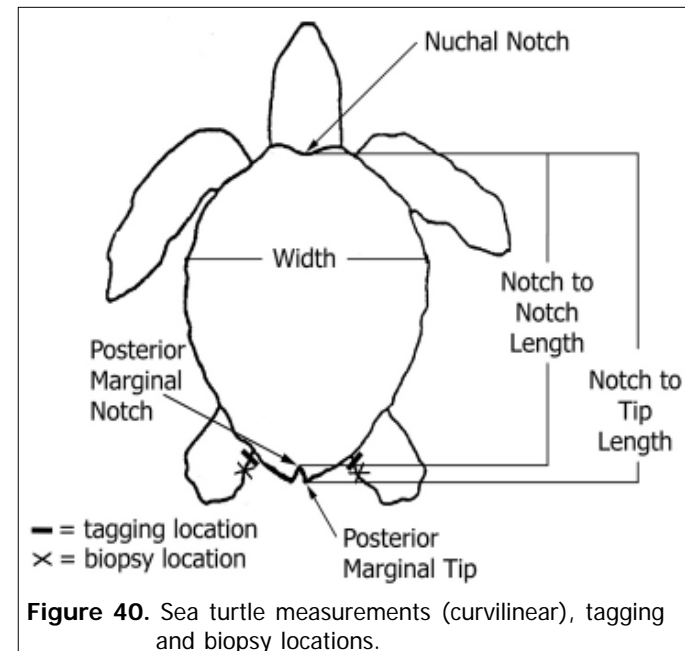


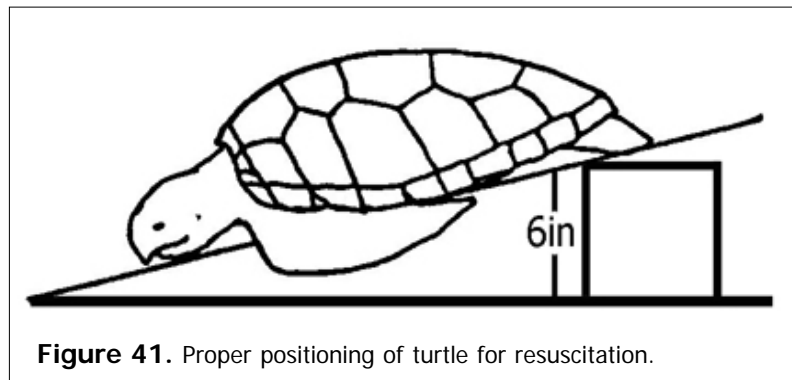
Figure 40. Sea turtle measurements (curvilinear), tagging and biopsy locations.

Resuscitation must be attempted on sea turtles that are comatose or inactive, but not dead. **Do not assume that an inactive turtle is dead.** The onset of rigor mortis is often the only definitive indication that a turtle is dead.

**RESUSCITATION:**

- 1 Place the turtle right side up (on the bottom shell or plastron).
- 2 Elevate the hindquarter 6 inches for a period of 4 up to 24 hours.
- 3 Protect from environmental conditions.
- 4 Periodically rock the turtle from side to side by holding the outer edge of the carapace and lifting one side about 3 inches.
- 5 Touch the upper eyelid and pinch the tail (reflex test) periodically to see if there is a response.

Those that revive and become active must be released over the stern of the boat when fishing gear is not in use, when the engine gears are in neutral position, and in areas where they are unlikely to be recaptured or injured by fishing gear or vessels. Sea turtles that fail to respond to the reflex test or fail to move within several hours (up to 24, if possible) should be returned to the water in the same manner.



**Figure 41.** Proper positioning of turtle for resuscitation.

**SEA TURTLE SAMPLING PROTOCOLS: resuscitation**